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*Teachings of ::*  
**KARL MARX**

BY  
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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Lenin's essay on Marxism, known as "Teachings of Karl Marx" was first written for "Granat Russian Encyclopædia," published in 1914 and hence, it is too brief.

The original essay is in three parts : the first deals with the life of Marx ; the second covers the whole range of Marx's theories ; and the third is a bibliography of Marxism. The first two parts are given here.

In this small pamphlet, Lenin puts forth all the salient principles of Marxism in a nutshell and it serves as an introduction to Lenin himself.

This book will help our workers with a clear understanding of Marxism.

It is reprinted from the revised edition of "selected works" of Lenin, published from the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute in U. S. S. R. (in 1939).

PUBLISHER.



# Teachings of Karl Marx

## KARL MARX

KARL MARX was born May 5, 1818, in the city of Trier (Rhenish Prussia). His father was a lawyer, a Jew, who in 1824 adopted Protestantism. The family was well-to-do, cultured, but not revolutionary. After graduating from the *gymnasium* in Trier, Marx entered university, first at Bonn and later at Berlin, where he studied jurisprudence and, chiefly, history and philosophy. He concluded his course in 1841, submitting his doctoral dissertation on the philosophy of Epicurus. In his views Marx at that time was still a Hegelian idealist. In Berlin he belonged to the circle of "Left Hegelians" (Bruno Bauer and others) who sought to draw atheistic and revolutionary conclusions from Hegel's philosophy.

After graduating from the university, Marx moved to Bonn, expecting to become a professor. But the reactionary policy of the government—which in 1832 deprived Ludwig Feuerbach of his chair and in 1836 refused to allow him to return to the university, and in 1841 forbade the young professor, Bruno Bauer, to lecture at Bonn—forced Marx to abandon the idea of pursuing an academic career. At that time the views of the Left Hegelians were developing very rapidly in Germany. Ludwig Feuerbach, particularly after 1836, began to criticise theology and to turn to materialism, which in 1841 gained the

upper hand in his philosophy (*Das Wesen des Christentums* [*The Essence of Christianity*]); in 1843 his *Grundsätze der Philosophie der Zukunft* (*Principles of the Philosophy of the Future*) appeared. "One must himself have experienced the liberating effect" of these books, Engels subsequently wrote of these works of Feuerbach. "We [*i.e.* the Left Hegelians, including Marx] all became at once Feuerbachians."<sup>1</sup> At that time some Rhenish radical bourgeois who had certain points in common with the Left Hegelians founded an opposition paper in Cologne, the *Rheinische Zeitung* (*Rhenish Gazette*)—the first number appeared on January 1, 1842. Marx and Bruno Bauer were invited to be the chief contributors, and in October 1842 Marx became chief editor and removed from Bonn to Cologne. The revolutionary-democratic trend of the paper became more and more pronounced under Marx's editorship, and the government first subjected the paper to double and triple censorship and then on January 1, 1843, decided to suppress it altogether. Marx had to resign the editorship before that date, but his resignation did not save the paper, which was closed down in March 1843. Of the more important articles contributed by Marx to the *Rheinische Zeitung*, Engels notes, in addition to those indicated below (see *Bibliography*),<sup>2</sup> an article on the condition of the peasant wine-growers of the Moselle Valley. His journalistic activities convinced Marx that he was not sufficiently acquainted with political economy, and he zealously set out to study it.

<sup>1</sup> F. Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach*, Indian ed., 1943, p. 27—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> *i.e.*, the *Bibliography of Marxism*, which Lenin appended to the original article, but which, from lack of space, is omitted in this edition.—Ed.

In 1843, in Kreuznach, Marx married Jenny von Westphalen, a childhood friend to whom he had been engaged while still a student. His wife came from a reactionary family of the Prussian nobility. Her elder brother was Prussian Minister of the Interior at a most reactionary period, 1850-58. In the autumn of 1843 Marx went to Paris in order, together with Arnold Ruge (born 1802, died 1880; a Left Hegelian; in 1825-30, in prison; after 1848, a political exile; after 1866-70, a Bismarckian), to publish a radical magazine abroad. Only one issue of this magazine, *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbucher* (*German-French Annals*) appeared. It was discontinued owing to the difficulty of secret distribution in Germany and to disagreements with Ruge. In his articles in this magazine Marx already appears as a revolutionary; he advocates the "merciless criticism of everything existing," and in particular the "criticism of arms", and appeals to the masses and to the *proletariat*.

In September 1844 Frederick Engels came to Paris for a few days, and from that time forth became Marx's closest friend. They both took a most active part in the then seething life of the revolutionary groups in Paris (of particular importance was Proudhon's doctrine, which Marx thoroughly demolished in his *Poverty of Philosophy*, 1847), and, vigorously combating the various doctrines of petty-bourgeois Socialism, worked out the theory and tactics of revolutionary *proletarian Socialism*, or Communism (Marxism). See Marx's works of this period, 1844-48, in the *Bibliography*. In 1845, on the insistent demand of the Prussian government, Marx was banished from Paris as a dangerous revolutionary. He removed to

Brussels. In the spring of 1847 Marx and Engels joined a secret propaganda society called the Communist League, took a prominent part in the Second Congress of the League (London, November 1847), and at its request drew up the famous *Communist Manifesto*, which appeared in February 1848. With the clarity and brilliance of genius, this work outlines the new world-conception, consistent materialism, which also embraces the realm of social life, dialectics, the most comprehensive and profound doctrine of development, the theory of the class struggle and of the historic revolutionary role of the proletariat—the creator of the new, Communist society.

When the Revolution of February 1848 broke out, Marx was banished from Belgium. He returned to Paris, whence, after the March Revolution, he went to Germany, again to Cologne. There the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* (*New Rhenish Gazette*) appeared from June 1, 1848, to May 19, 1849; Marx was the chief editor. The new theory was brilliantly corroborated by the course of the revolutionary events of 1848-49, as it has been since corroborated by all proletarian and democratic movements of all countries in the world. The victorious counter-revolution first instigated court proceedings against Marx (he was acquitted on February 9, 1849) and then banished him from Germany (May 16, 1849). Marx first went to Paris, was again banished after the demonstration of June 13, 1849, and then went to London, where he lived to the day of his death.

His life as a political exile was a very hard one, as the correspondence between Marx and Engels (published in

1813)<sup>1</sup> clearly reveals. Marx and his family suffered dire poverty. Were it not for Engel's constant and self-sacrificing financial support, Marx would not only have been unable to finish *Capital* but would have inevitably perished from want. Moreover, the prevailing doctrines and trends of petty-bourgeois Socialism, and of non-proletarian Socialism in general, forced Marx to carry on a continuous and merciless fight and sometimes to repel the most savage and monstrous personal attacks ( *Herr Vogt* ). Holding aloof from the circles of political exiles, Marx developed his materialist theory in a number of historic work ( see *Bibliography* ), devoting his efforts chiefly to the study of political economy. Marx revolutionised this science (see below, "The Marxian Doctrine") in his *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* ( 1859 ) and *Capital* ( Vol. I, 1867 ).

The period of revival of the democratic movements at the end of the 'fifties and the 'sixties recalled Marx to practical activity. In 1864 (September 28) the International Workingmen's Association—the famous First International—was founded in London. Marx was the heart and soul of this organisation ; he was the author of its first Address and of a host of resolutions, declarations and manifestoes. By uniting the labour movement of various countries, by striving to direct into the channel of joint activity the various forms of non-proletarian, pre-Marxian Socialism (Mazzini, Proudhon, Bakunin, liberal trade unionism in England, Lassalleian vacillation to the Right in Germany, etc), and by combating the theories of all these sects and schools, Marx hammered out a uniform

<sup>1</sup> Hereafter referred to as the *Briefwechsel* (Correspondence).—Trans.

tactic for the proletarian struggle of the working class in the various countries. After the fall of the Paris Commune (1871)—of which Marx gave such a profound, clear-cut, brilliant, *effective* and revolutionary analysis (*The Civil War in France*, 1871), and after the International was split by the Bakunists, the existence of that organisation in Europe became impossible. After the Hague Congress of the International (1872) Marx had the General Council of the International transferred to New York. The First International had accomplished its historical role, and it made way for a period of immeasurably larger growth of the labour movement in all the countries of the world, a period, in fact, when the movement grew in *breadth* and when *mass* Socialist labour parties in individual national states were created.

His strenuous work in the International and his still more strenuous theoretical occupations completely undermined Marx's health. He continued his work on the reshaping of political economy and the completion of *Capital*, for which he collected a mass of new material and studied a number of languages (Russian, for instance); but ill-health prevented him from finishing *Capital*.

On December 2, 1881, his wife died. On March 14, 1883, Marx peacefully passed away in his armchair. He lies buried with his wife and Helene Demuth, their devoted servant who was almost a member of the family, in the Highgate Cemetery. London.

### THE MARXIAN DOCTRINE.

*Marxism* is the system of the views and teachings of Marx. Marx was the genius who continued and completed

the three main ideological currents of the nineteenth century, belonging to the three most advanced countries of mankind : classical German philosophy, classical English political economy, and French Socialism together with French revolutionary doctrines in general. The remarkable consistency and integrity of Marx's views, acknowledged even by his opponents, views which in their totality constitute modern materialism and modern scientific Socialism, as the theory and programme of the labour movement in all the civilised countries of the world, oblige us to present a brief outline of his world-conception in general before proceeding to the exposition of the principal content of Marxism, namely, Marx's economic doctrine.

### PHILOSOPHICAL MATERIALISM

From 1844-45, when his views took shape, Marx was a materialist, in particular a follower of L. Feuerbach, whose weak sides he even later considered to consist exclusively in the fact that his materialism was not consistent and comprehensive enough. Marx regarded the historic and "epoch-making" importance of Feuerbach to be that he had resolutely broken away from Hegelian idealism and had proclaimed materialism, which already in the eighteenth century, especially in France, "had been a struggle not only against the existing political institutions and against...religion and theology, but also...against all metaphysics" (in the sense of "intoxicated speculation" as distinct from "sober philosophy") (*The Holy Family*, in the *Literarischer Nachlaß*)

"To Hegel"...wrote Marx, "the process of thinking, which, under the name of 'the idea', he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurgos [the creator, the maker] of the real world.... With me, on the contrary, the idea is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought" (*Capital*, Vol. I Preface to the Second Edition).<sup>1</sup>

In full conformity with this materialist philosophy of Marx's, and expounding it, Frederick Engels wrote in *Anti-Duhring* (which Marx read in manuscript):

"The unity of the world does not consist in its being... The real unity of the world consists in its materiality, and this is proved... by a long and tedious development of philosophy and natural science..."<sup>2</sup> "Motion is the mode of existence of matter. Never anywhere has there been matter without motion, nor can there be..."<sup>3</sup> But if the...question is raised: what than are thought and consciousness, and whence they come, it becomes apparent that they are products of the human brain and that man himself is a product of nature, which has been developed in and along with its environment; whence it is self-evident that the products of the human brain, being in the last analysis also products of nature, do not contradict the rest of nature but are in correspondence with it."<sup>4</sup>

"Hegel was an idealist, that is to say, the thoughts within his mind were to him not the more or less abstract images [*Abbilder*, reflections; Engels sometimes speaks of "imprints"] of real things and processes, but, on the contrary, things and their development were to him only the images made real of the 'Idea' existing somewhere or other already before the world existed."<sup>5</sup>

In his *Ludwig Feuerbach*—in which he expounds his and Marx's views on Feuerbach's philosophy, and which he sent to the press after re-reading an old manuscript written by Marx and himself in 1844-45 on Hegel,

<sup>1</sup> Here and elsewhere in this book quotations from *Capital* are taken from the edition of Charles H. KERR & Co., Chicago.—Trans.

<sup>2</sup> *Her Eugen Duhring's Revolution in Science* (*Anti-Duhring*), Eng. ed., 1934, p. 54 Ed.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71 Ed.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45 Ed.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31. Ed.

Feuerbach and the materialist conception of history—Frederick Engels writes :

"The great basic question of all philosophy, especially of modern philosophy, is that concerning the relation of thinking and being... spirit to nature... which is primary, spirit or nature... The answers which the philosophers gave to this question split them into two great camps. Those who asserted the primacy of spirit to nature and, therefore, in the last instance, assumed world creation in some form or other... comprised the camp of idealism. The others, who regarded nature as primary, belong to the various schools of materialism."

Any other use of the concepts of (philosophical) idealism and materialism leads only to confusion. Marx decidedly rejected not only idealism, always connected in one way or another with religion, but also the views, specially widespread in our day, of Hume and Kant, agnosticism, criticism, positivism in their various forms, regarding such a philosophy as a "reactionary" concession to idealism and at best a "shamefaced way of surreptitiously accepting materialism, while denying it before the world." <sup>1</sup> On this question, see, in addition to the above-mentioned works of Engels and Marx, a letter of Marx to Engels dated December 12, 1866, in which Marx, referring to an utterance of the well-known naturalist Thomas Huxley that was "more materialistic" than usual, and to his recognition that "as long as we actually observe and think, we cannot possibly get away from materialism," at the same time reproaches him for leaving a "loophole" for agnosticism and Humeism. It is especially important to note Marx's view on the relation between freedom and necessity : "Freedom is the appreciation of necessity. 'Necessity is blind only in so far as it is not understood'" (Engels,

<sup>1</sup> F. Engels *Ludwig Feuerbach*, Ind. ed., 1943, pp. -29-30.—Ed

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33,—Ed.

*Anti-Duhring*).<sup>1</sup> This means the recognition of objective law in nature and of the dialectical transformation of necessity into freedom (in the same manner as the transformation of the unknown, but knowable, "thing-in-itself" into the "thing-for-us," of the "essence of things" into "phenomena") Marx and Engels considered the fundamental limitations of the "old" materialism, including the materialism of Feuerbach (and still more of the "vulgar" materialism of Buchner, Vogt and Moleschotti), to be : (1) that this materialism was "predominantly mechanical," failing to take account of the latest developments of chemistry and biology (in our day it would be necessary to add : and of the electrical theory of matter) ; (2) that the old materialism was non-historical, non-dialectical (metaphysical, in the sense of anti-dialectical), and did not adhere consistently and comprehensively to the standpoint of development ; (3) that it regarded the "human essence" abstractly and not as the "*ensemble*" of all concretely defined historical "social relations" and therefore only "interpreted" the world, whereas the point is to "change" it ; that is to say, it did not understand the importance of "revolutionary, practical-critical, activity."

### DIALECTICS

Hegelian dialectics, as the most comprehensive, the most rich in content, and the most profound doctrine of development, was regarded by Marx and Engels as the greatest achievement of classical German philosophy. They considered every other formulation of the principle of development, of evolution, one-sided and poor in content,

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 130—Ed.

and distorting and mutilating the real course of development (often proceeding by leaps, catastrophes and revolutions) in nature, and in society.

"Marx and I were pretty well the only people to rescue conscious dialectics (from the destruction of idealism, including Hegelianism) and apply it in the materialist conception of nature...<sup>1</sup> Nature is the test of dialectics, and it must be said for modern natural science that it has furnished extremely rich (this was written before the discovery of radium, electrons, the transmutation of elements, etc.) and daily increasing materials for this test, and has thus proved that in the last analysis nature's process is dialectical and not metaphysical."<sup>2</sup>

"The great basic thought," Engels writes, "that the world is not to be comprehended as a complex of ready-made things, but as a complex of processes, in which the things apparently stable, no less than their mind-images in our heads, the concepts, go through an uninterrupted change of coming into being and passing away—this great fundamental thought has, especially since the time of Hegel, so thoroughly permeated ordinary consciousness that in this generality it is scarcely ever contradicted. But to acknowledge this fundamental thought in words and to apply it in reality in detail to each domain of investigation are two different things."<sup>3</sup>

'For it (dialectical philosophy) nothing is final, absolute, sacred. It reveals the transitory character of everything and in everything; nothing can endure before it except the uninterrupted process of becoming and of passing away, of endless ascendancy from the lower to the higher. And dialectical philosophy itself is nothing more than the mere reflection of this process in the thinking brain."<sup>4</sup>

Thus according to Marx, dialectics is "the science of the general laws of motion—both of the external world and of human thought."<sup>5</sup>

This revolutionary side of Hegel's philosophy was adopted and developed by Marx. Dialectical materialism "no longer needs any philosophy standing above the other

<sup>1</sup> *Anti-Dühring*. p. 15.—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 29.—Ed.

<sup>3</sup> *Ludwig Feuerbach*, p. 55.—Ed.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.—Ed.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.—Ed.

sciences.”<sup>1</sup> Of former philosophy there remains “the science of thought and its laws—formal logic and dialectics.”<sup>2</sup> And dialectics, as understood by Marx, and in conformity with Hegel, includes what is now called the theory of knowledge, or epistemology, which, too, must regard its subject matter historically, studying and generalising the origin and development of knowledge, the transition from *non-knowledge* to knowledge.

Nowadays, the idea of development, of evolution, has penetrated the social consciousness almost in its entirety, but by different ways, not by way of the Hegelian philosophy. But as formulated by Marx and Engels on the basis of Hegel, this idea is far more comprehensive, far richer in content than the current idea of evolution. A development that seemingly repeats the stages already passed, but repeats them otherwise, on a higher basis (“negation of negation”), a development, so to speak, in spirals, not in a straight line;—a development by leaps, catastrophes, revolutions;—“breaks in continuity”;—the transformation of quantity into quality;—the inner impulses to development, imparted by the contradiction and conflict of the various forces and tendencies acting on a given body, or within a given phenomenon, or within a given society;—the interdependence and the closest, indissoluble connection of *all* sides of every phenomenon (while history constantly discloses ever new sides), a connection that provides a uniform, law-governed, universal process of motion—such are some of the features of dialectics as a richer (than the ordinary) doctrine of development. (See

<sup>1</sup> *Anti-Dühring*, p. 32.—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.—Ed.

Marx's letter to Engels of January 8, 1868, in which he ridicules Stein's "wooden trichotomies," which it would be absurd to confuse with materialist dialectics.)

### THE MATERIALIST CONCEPTION OF HISTORY

Having realised the inconsistency, incompleteness, and onesidedness of the old materialism, Marx became convinced of the necessity of "bringing the science of society... into harmony with the materialist foundation, and of reconstructing it thereupon."<sup>1</sup> Since materialism in general explains consciousness as the outcome of being, and not conversely, materialism as applied to the social life of mankind had to explain *social* consciousness as the outcome of *social* being.

"Technology," writes Marx (*Capital*, Vol. I), "discloses man's mode of dealing with nature, the process of production by which he sustains his life, and thereby also lays bare the mode of formation of his social relations, and of the mental conceptions that flow from them."<sup>2</sup>

In the preface to his *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Marx gives an integral formulation of the fundamental principles of materialism as extended to human society and its history, in the following words :

"In the social production which men carry on they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will ; these relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material forces of production. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society—the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production in material life determines the social, political and intellectual life processes in general. It is

<sup>1</sup> Ludwig Feuerbach, p. 39—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 406—Ed.

not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of their development, the material forces of production in society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or—what is but a legal expression for the same thing—with the property relations within which they have been at work before. From forms of development of the forces of production these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. In considering such transformations a distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, æsthetic or philosophic—in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as our opinion of an individual is not based on what he thinks of himself, so can we not judge of such a period of transformation by its own consciousness; on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained rather from the contradictions of material life, from the existing conflict between the social forces of production and the relations of production.....In broad outlines we can designate the Asiatic, the ancient, the feudal, and the modern bourgeois modes of production as so many epochs in the progress of the economic formation of society.” (Cf. Marx’s brief formulation in a letter to Engels dated July 7, 1866: “Our theory that the organisation of labour is determined by the means of production.”)

The discovery of the materialist conception of history, or rather, the consistent extension of materialism to the domain of social phenomena, removed two of the chief defects of earlier historical theories. In the first place, they at best examined only the ideological motives of the historical activity of human beings, without investigating what produced these motives, without grasping the objective laws governing the development of the system of social relations, and without discerning the roots of these relations in the degree of development of material production; in the second place, the earlier theories did not cover the activities of the *masses* of the population,

<sup>1</sup>Karl Marx, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Eng. ed., 1935. pp. 356-57—Ed.

whereas historical materialism made it possible for the first time to study with the accuracy of the natural sciences the social conditions of the life of the masses and the changes in these conditions. Pre-Marxian "sociology" and historiography *at best* provided an accumulation of raw facts, collected at random, and a depiction of certain sides of the historical process. By examining the *ensemble* of all the opposing tendencies, by reducing them to precisely definable conditions of life and production of the various *classes* of society, by discarding subjectivism and arbitrariness in the choice of various "leading" ideas or in their interpretation, and by disclosing that all ideas and all the various tendencies, without exception, have their *roots* in the condition of the material forces of production, Marxism pointed the way to an all-embracing and comprehensive study of the process of rise, development, and decline of social-economic formations. People make their own history. But what determines the motives of people, of the mass of people ; that is : what gives rise to the clash of conflicting ideas and strivings ; what is the ensemble of all these clashes of the whole mass of human societies ; what are the objective conditions of production of material life that form the basis of all historical activity of man ; what is the law of development of these conditions—to all this Marx drew attention and pointed out the way to a scientific study of history as a uniform and law-governed process in all its immense variety and contradictoriness.

### THE CLASS STRUGGLE

That in any given society the striving of some of its members conflict with the strivings of others, that social

life is full of contradictions, that history discloses a struggle between nations and societies as well as within nations and societies, and, in addition, an alternation of periods of revolution and reaction, peace and war, stagnation and rapid progress or decline—are facts that are generally known. Marxism provided the clue which enables us to discover the laws governing this seeming labyrinth and chaos, namely, the theory of the class struggle. Only a study of the ensemble of strivings of all the members of a given society or group of societies can lead to a scientific definition of the result of these strivings. And the source of the conflict of strivings lies in the differences in the position and mode of life of the *classes* into which each society is divided.

"The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles," wrote Marx in the *Communist Manifesto* (except the history of the primitive community—Engels added).

"Freeman and slave, patrician and plebian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.....

"The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones.

"Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinctive feature: it has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other—bourgeoisie and proletariat.

Ever since the Great French Revolution, European history has very clearly revealed in a number of countries this real undersurface of events, the struggle of classes. And the Restoration period in France already produced a number

of historians (Thierry, Guizot, Mignet, Thiers) who, generalising from events, were forced to recognise that the class struggle was the key to all French history. And the modern era—the era of the complete victory of the bourgeoisie, representative institutions, wide (if not universal) suffrage, a cheap, popular daily press, etc., the era of powerful and ever-expanding unions of workers and unions of employers, etc.—have revealed even more manifestly (though sometimes in a very one-sided, “peaceful,” “constitutional” form) that the class struggle is the main-spring of events. The following passage from Marx’s *Communist Manifesto* will show us what Marx required of social science in respect to an objective analysis of the position of each class in modern society in connection with an analysis of the conditions of development of each class :

“Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of modern industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product.

“The lower middle class, the small manufacturer, the shopkeeper, the artisan, the peasant, all these fight against the bourgeoisie to save from extinction their existence as fractions of the lower middle class. They are therefore not revolutionary, but conservative. Nay more, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history. If by chance they are revolutionary, they are so only in view of their impending transfer into the proletariat; they thus defend not their present, but their future interests; they desert their own standpoint to place themselves at that of the proletariat.”

In a number of historic works (see *Bibliography*), Marx has given us brilliant and profound examples of materialist historiography, of an analysis of the position of *each* individual class, and sometimes of various groups or strata within a class, showing plainly why and how “every class struggle is a political struggle.” The above-quoted passage is an illustration of what a complex network of social

relations and *transitional* stages between one class and another, from the past to the future, Marx analyses in order to determine the result of historical development.

The most profound, comprehensive and detailed confirmation and application of Marx's theory is his economic doctrine.

### MARX'S ECONOMIC DOCTRINE

"It is the ultimate aim of this work to lay bare the economic law of motion of modern society" (that is to say, capitalist, bourgeois society), says Marx in the preface to *Capital*. The investigation of the relations of production in a given, historically defined society, in their genesis, development, and decline—such is the content of Marx's economic doctrine. In capitalist society it is the production of *commodities* that dominates, and Marx's analysis therefore begins with an analysis of the commodity.

#### *Value*

A commodity is, in the first place, a thing that satisfies a human want; in the second place, it is a thing that can be exchanged for another thing. The utility of a thing makes it a *use-value*. Exchange-value (or simply, value) presents itself first of all as a relation, as the proportion in which a certain number of use-values of one sort are exchanged for a certain number of use-values of another sort. Daily experience shows us that millions upon millions of such exchanges are constantly equating one with another every kind of use-value, even the most diverse

and incomparable. Now, what is there in common between these various things, things constantly equated one with another in a definite system of social relations? What is common to them is that they are *products of labour*. In exchanging products people equate to one another the most diverse kinds of labour. The production of commodities is a system of social relations in which the single producers create diverse products (the social division of labour), and in which all these products are equated to one another in exchange. Consequently, what is common to all commodities is not the concrete labour of a definite branch of production, not labour of one particular kind, but *abstract human labour*—human labour in general. All the labour power of a given society, as represented in the sum total of values of all commodities, is one and the same human labour power; millions and millions of acts of exchange prove this. And, consequently, each particular commodity represents only a certain share of the *socially necessary* labour time. The magnitude of value is determined by the amount of socially necessary labour, or by the labour time that is socially necessary for the production of the given commodity, of the given use-value.

'... Whenever, by an exchange, we equate as values our different products, by that very act, we also equate, as human labour, the different kinds of labour expended upon them. We are not aware of this, nevertheless we do it.'<sup>1</sup>

As one of the earlier economists said, value is a relation between two persons; only he ought to have added: a relation between persons expressed as a relation between things. We can understand what value is only when we

<sup>1</sup> *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 85—Ed.

consider it from the standpoint of the system of social relations of production of one particular historical formation of society, relations, moreover, which manifest themselves in the mass phenomenon of exchange, a phenomenon which repeats itself millions upon millions of times.

"As values, all commodities are only definite masses of congealed labour time."<sup>1</sup>

Having made a detailed analysis of the twofold character of the labour incorporated in commodities, Marx goes on to analyse the *forms of value and money*. Marx's main task here is to study the *origin* of the money form of value, to study the *historical process* of development of exchange, from isolated and casual acts of exchange ("elementary or accidental form of value," in which a given quantity of one commodity is exchanged for a given quantity of another) to the universal form of value, in which a number of different commodities are exchanged for one and the same particular commodity, and to the money form of value, when gold becomes this particular commodity, the universal equivalent. Being the highest product of the development of exchange and commodity production, money masks and conceals the social character of all individual labour, the social tie between the individual producers who are united by the market. Marx analyses in great detail the various functions of money; and it is essential to note here in particular (as generally in the opening chapters of *Capital*), that the abstract and seemingly at times purely deductive mode of exposition in reality reproduces a gigantic collection of factual material.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 46.—Ed.

on the history of the development of exchange and commodity production.

‘.....If we consider money, its existence implies a definite stage in the exchange of commodities. The particular functions of money which it performs, either as the mere equivalent of commodities, or as means of circulation, or means of payment, as hoard or as universal money, point according to the extent and relative preponderance of the one function or the other, to very different stages in the process of social production”. (Capital Vol. 1)<sup>1</sup>

### *Surplus Value*

At a certain stage in the development of commodity production money becomes transformed into capital. The formula of commodity circulation was C—M—C (commodity—money—commodity), i.e., the sale of one commodity for the purpose of buying another. The general formula of capital, on the contrary, is M—C—M (money—commodity—money), i.e., purchase for the purpose of selling (at a profit). The increase over the original value of money put into circulation Marx calls surplus value. The fact of this “growth” of money in capitalist circulation<sup>1</sup> is well known. It is this “growth” which transforms money into *capital*, as a special, historically defined, social relation of production. Surplus value cannot arise out of commodity circulation, for the latter knows only the exchange of equivalents ; it cannot arise out of an addition to price, for the mutual losses and gains of buyers and sellers would equalise one another, whereas what we have here is not an individual phenomenon but a mass, average, social phenomenon. In order to derive surplus value, the owner of money “must .....find.....in the market a commodity

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 189.—Ed.

whose use-value possesses the peculiar property of being a source of value"<sup>1</sup>—a commodity whose process of consumption is at the same time a process of creation of value. And such a commodity exists. It is human labour power. Its consumption is labour, and labour creates value. The owner of money buys labour power at its value, which, like the value of every other commodity, is determined by the socially necessary labour time requisite for its production (*i.e.*, the cost of maintaining the worker and his family). Having bought labour power, the owner of money is entitled to use it, that is, to set it to work for the whole day—twelve<sup>1</sup> hours, let us suppose. Yet, in the course of six hours ("necessary" labour time) the labourer produces product sufficient to cover the cost of his own maintenance; and in the course of the next six hours ("surplus" labour time), he produces "surplus" product, or surplus value, for which the capitalist does not pay. In capital, therefore, from the standpoint of the process of production, two parts must be distinguished: constant capital, expended on means of production (machinery, tools, raw materials, etc.), the value of which, without any change, is transferred (all at once or part by part) to the finished product; and variable capital, expended on labour power. The value of this latter capital, is not invariable, but grows in the labour process, creating surplus value. Therefore, to express the degree of exploitation of labour power by capital, surplus value must be compared not with the whole capital but only with the variable capital. Thus in the example given, the rate of surplus

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 186.—Ed.

value, as Marx calls this ratio, will be 6 : 6, i.e., 100 per cent.

The historical conditions necessary for the genesis of capital were, firstly, the accumulation of a certain sum of money in the hands of individuals and a relatively high level of development of commodity production in general, and, secondly, the existence of a labourer who is "free" in a double sense : free from all constraint or restriction on the sale of his labour power, and free from the land and of all means of production in general, a propertyless labourer, a "proletarian", who cannot subsist except by the sale of his labour power.

There are two principal methods by which surplus value can be increased : by lengthening the working day ("absolute surplus value"), and by shortening the necessary working day ("relative surplus value"). Analysing the first method, Marx gives a most impressive picture of the struggle of the working class to shorten the working day and of governmental interference to lengthen the working day (from the fourteenth century to the seventeenth century) and to shorten the working day (factory legislation of the nineteenth century). Since the appearance of *Capital*, the history of the working-class movement in all civilised countries of the world has provided a wealth of new facts amplifying this picture.

Analysing the production of relative surplus value, Marx investigates the three main historical stages by which capitalism has increased the productivity of labour : (1) simple co-operation ; (2) division of labour and manufacture ; (3) machinery and large-scale industry. How profoundly Marx has here revealed the basic and typical

features of capitalist development is incidentally shown by the fact that investigations of what is known as the "kustār" industry<sup>1</sup> of Russia furnish abundant material illustrating the first two of the mentioned stages. And the revolutionising effect of large-scale machine industry, described by Marx in 1867, has been revealed in a number of "new" countries (Russia, Japan, etc.) in the course of the half-century that has since elapsed.

To continue. New and important in the highest degree is Marx's analysis of the *accumulation of capital*, i.e., the transformation of a part of surplus value into capital, its use, not for satisfying the personal needs or whims of the capitalist, but for new production. Marx revealed the mistake of all the earlier classical political economists (from Adam Smith on), who assumed that the entire surplus value which is transformed into capital goes to form variable capital. In actual fact, it is divided into *means of production* and variable capital. Of tremendous importance to the process of development of capitalism and its transformation into Socialism is the more rapid growth of the constant capital share (of the total capital) as compared with the variable capital share.

The accumulation of capital, by accelerating the replacement of workers by machinery and creating wealth at one pole and poverty at the other, also gives rise to what is called the "reserve army of labour," to the "relative surplus" of workers or "capitalist overpopulation," which assumes the most diverse forms and enables capital to expand production at an extremely fast rate. This, in conjunction

<sup>1</sup> Home industry.—Trans.

with credit facilities and the accumulation of capital in the means of production, incidentally furnishes the clue to the *crises* of overproduction that occur periodically in capitalist countries—at first at an average of every ten years, and later at more lengthy and less definite intervals. From the accumulation of capital under capitalism must be distinguished what is known as primitive accumulation: the forcible divorcement of the worker from the means of production, the driving of the peasants from the land, the stealing of the commons, the system of colonies and national debts, protective tariffs, and the like. “Primitive accumulation” creates the “free” proletarian at one pole, and the owner of money, the capitalist, at the other.

The “*historical tendency of capitalist accumulation*” is described by Marx in the following famous words:

“The expropriation of the immediate producers was accomplished with merciless vandalism, and under the stimulus of passions the most infamous, the most sordid, the pettiest, the most meanly odious. Self-earned private property [of the peasant and handicraftsman], that is based, so to say, on the fusing together of the isolated, independent labouring-individual with the conditions of his labour, is supplanted by capitalistic private property, which rests on exploitation of the nominally free labour of others.... That which is now to be expropriated is no longer the labourer working for himself, but the capitalist exploiting many labourers. This expropriation is accomplished by the action of the immanent laws of capitalistic production itself, by the centralisation of capital. One capitalist always kills many. Hand in hand with this centralisation, or this expropriation of many capitalists by few, develop, on an ever extending scale, the co-operative form of the labour process, the conscious technical application of science, the methodical cultivation of the soil, the transformation of the instruments of labour into instruments of labour only usable in common, the economising of all means of production by their use as the means of production of combined, socialised labour, the entanglement of all peoples in the net of the world market, and, with this, the international character of the capitalistic regime. Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital, who usurp and monopolise all advantages of this process of transformation, grows the mass of misery, oppres-

sion, slavery, degradation, exploitation ; but with this too grows the revolt of the working class, a class always increasing in numbers, and disciplined, united, organised by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself. The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production, which has sprung up and flourished along with and under it. Centralisation of the means of production and socialisation of labour at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated." (*Capital* Vol. I).<sup>1</sup>

New and important in the highest degree, further, is the analysis Marx gives in the second volume of *Capital* of the reproduction of the aggregate social capital. Here, too, Marx deals not with an individual phenomenon but with a mass phenomenon ; not with a fractional part of the economy of society but with this economy as a whole. Correcting the mistake of the classical economists mentioned above, Marx divides the entire social production into two big sections: (I) production of means of production, and (II) production of articles of consumption, and examines in detail, with arithmetical examples, the circulation of the aggregate social capital—both in the case of production in its former dimensions and in the case of accumulation. The third volume of *Capital* solves the problem of the formation of the average rate of profit on the basis of the law of value. The immense advance in economic science made by Marx consists in the fact that he conducts his analysis from the standpoint of mass economic phenomena, of the social economy as a whole, and not from the standpoint of individual cases or of the external, superficial aspects of competition, to which vulgar political economy and the modern "theory of marginal utility" are frequently limited. Marx first analyses the

<sup>1</sup> *Capital* Vol. I. pp. 835-37.—Ed.

origin of surplus value, and then goes on to consider its division into profit, interest, and ground rent. Profit is the ratio between the surplus value and the total capital invested in an undertaking. Capital with a "high organic composition" (*i-e.*, with a preponderance of constant capital over variable capital exceeding the social average) yields a lower than average rate of profit; capital with a "low organic composition" yields a higher than average rate of profit. The competition of capitals, and the freedom with which they transfer from one branch to another reduces the rate of profit to the average in both cases. The sum total of the values of all the commodities of a given society coincides with the sum total of prices of the commodities; but, owing to competition, in individual undertakings and branches of production commodities are sold not at their values but at the *prices of production* (or production prices), which are equal to the expended capital plus the average profit.

In this way the well-known and indisputable fact of the divergence between prices and values and of the equalisation of profits is fully explained by Marx on the basis of the law of value; for the sum total of values of all commodities coincides with the sum total of prices. However, the reduction of (social) value to (individual) prices does not take place simply and directly, but in a very complex way. It is quite natural that in a society of separate producers of commodities, who are united only by the market, law can reveal itself only as an average, social, mass law, when individual deviations to one side or the other mutually compensate one another.

An increase in the productivity of labour implies a.

more rapid growth of constant capital as compared with variable capital. And since surplus value is a function of variable capital alone, it is obvious that the rate of profit (the ratio of surplus value to the whole capital, and not to its variable part alone) tends to fall. Marx makes a detailed analysis of this tendency and of a number of circumstances that conceal or counteract it. Without passing to give an account of the extremely interesting sections of the third volume of *Capital* devoted to usurer's capital, commercial capital and money capital, we pass to the most important section, the theory of *ground rent*. Owing to the fact that the land area is limited and, in capitalist countries, is all occupied by individual private owners, the price of production of agricultural products is determined by the cost of production not on average soil, but on the worst soil, not under average conditions, but under the worst conditions of delivery of produce to the market. The difference between this price and the price of production on better soil (or under better conditions) constitutes *differential rent*. Analysing this in detail, and showing how it arises out of the difference in fertility of different plots of land and the difference in the amount of capital invested in land, Marx fully exposed (see also *Theories of Surplus Value*, in which the criticism of Rodbertus deserves particular attention) the error of Ricardo, who considered that differential rent is derived only when there is a successive transition from better land to worse. On the contrary, there may be inverse transitions, land may pass from one category into others (owing to advances in agricultural technique, the growth of towns, and so on), and the notorious "law of diminishing returns" is a profound

error which charges nature with the defects, limitations and contradictions of capitalism. Further, the equalisation of profit in all branches of industry and national economy in general presupposes complete freedom of competition and the free flow of capital from one branch to another. But the private ownership of land creates monopoly, which hinders this free flow. Owing to this monopoly, the products of agriculture, which is distinguished by a lower organic composition of capital, and, consequently, by an individually higher rate of profit, do not participate in the entirely free process of equalisation of the rate of profit: the landowner, being a monopolist, can keep the price above the average, and this monopoly price engenders *absolute rent*. Differential rent cannot be done away with under capitalism, but absolute rent *can*—for instance, by the nationalisation of the land, by making it the property of the state. Making the land the property of the state would put an end to the monopoly of private landowners, and would lead to a more systematic and complete application of freedom of competition in the domain of agriculture. And, therefore, Marx points out in the course of history bourgeois radicals have again and again advanced this progressive bourgeois demand for the nationalisation of the land, which, however, frightens away the majority of the bourgeoisie, because it too closely “touches” another monopoly, which is particularly important and “sensitive” in our day—the monopoly of the means of production in general. (Marx gives a remarkably popular, concise, and clear exposition of his theory of the average rate of profit on capital and of absolute ground rent in a letter to Engels, dated August 2, 1862. See *Briefwechsel*, Vol

III, pp.77-81 ; also the letter of August 9, 1862. Vol. III, pp.86-87.) <sup>1</sup> For the history of ground rent it is also important to note Marx's analysis showing how labour rent (when the peasant creates surplus product by labouring on the lord's land ) is transformed into rent in produce or in kind (when the peasant creates surplus product on his own land and cedes it to the lord due to "non-economic constraint"), then into money rent (which is rent in kind transformed into money, the *obrok*<sup>2</sup> of old Russia,) due to the development of commodity production, and finally into capitalist rent, when the peasant is replaced by the agricultural entrepreneur, who cultivates the soil with the help of wage-labour. In connection with this analysis of the "genesis of capitalist ground rent," note should be made of a number of subtle ideas (especially important for backward countries like Russia) expressed by Marx on the *evolution of capitalism in agriculture*.

"The transformation of rent in kind into money rent is not only necessarily accompanied, but even anticipated by the formation of a class of propertyless day labourers, who hire themselves out for wages. During the period of their rise, when this new class appears but so radically, the custom necessarily develops among the better situated tributary farmers of exploiting agricultural labourers for their own account, just as the wealthier serfs in feudal times used to employ serfs for their own benefit. In this way they gradually acquire the ability to accumulate a certain amount of wealth and to transform themselves even into future capitalists. The old self-employing possessors of the land thus give rise among themselves to a nursery for capitalist tenants, whose development is conditioned upon the general development of capitalist production outside of the rural districts" (*Capital* Vol. III).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The references are to the Russian edition. Cf. Marx-Engels Selected Correspondence, Martin Lawrence Ltd., London, pp. 129-33 and 137-38—Trans.

<sup>2</sup> Quit-rent.—Trans.

<sup>3</sup> *Capital*, Vol. III, p. 928—Ed.

"The expropriation and eviction of a part of the agricultural population not only set free for industrial capital, the labourers, their means of subsistence, and material for labour; it also created the home market."<sup>1</sup>

The impoverishment and ruin of the agricultural population lead, in their turn, to the formation of a reserve army of labour for capital. In every capitalist country

"part of the agricultural population is therefore constantly on the point of passing over into an urban or manufacturing proletariat... (Manufacture is used here in the sense of all non-agricultural industries.) This source of relative surplus population is thus constantly flowing... The agricultural labourer is therefore reduced to the minimum of wages, and always stands with one foot already in the swamp of pauperism" (*Capital*, Vol. I).<sup>2</sup>

The private ownership of the peasant in the land he tills constitutes the basis of small-scale production and the condition for its prospering and attaining a classical form. But such small-scale production is compatible only with a narrow and primitive framework of production and society. Under capitalism the

"exploitation (of the peasants) differs only in form from the exploitation of the industrial proletariat. The exploiter is the same: capital. The individual capitalists exploit the individual peasants through mortgages and usury; the capitalist class exploits the peasant class through the state taxes" (*The Class Struggles in France 1848-50*).<sup>3</sup> "The small holding of the peasant is now only the pretext that allows the capitalist to draw profits, interest and rent from the soil, while leaving it to the tiller of the soil himself to see how he can extract his wages."<sup>4</sup>

As a rule the peasant cedes to capitalist society, i.e., to the capitalist class, even a part of the wages, sinking "to the

<sup>1</sup> *Capital*, Vol. I. p. 819—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 705—Ed.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Karl Marx, *Selected Works*, Vol. II. Eng. ed. p. 292—Ed.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, in *Selected Works*, Vol. II. Eng. ed., pp. 418-19—Ed.

level of the *Irish tenant farmer*—all under the pretence of being a *private proprietor*" (*The Class Struggles in France 1848-50*).<sup>1</sup>

What is

"One of the causes which keeps the price of cereals lower in countries with a predominance of small farmers than in countries with a capitalist mode of production"? (*Capital*, Vol. III.)<sup>2</sup>

It is that the peasant cedes to society (*i.e.*, to the capitalist class) part of his surplus product without an equivalent.

"This lower price (of cereals and other agricultural produce) is also a result of the poverty of the producers and by no means of the productivity of their labour" (*Capital*, Vol. III.)<sup>3</sup>

The smallholding system, which is the normal form of small-scale production, deteriorates, collapses, perishes under capitalism.

"Small peasants' property excludes by its very nature the development of social powers of production of labour; the social forms of labour, the social concentration of capitals, cattle raising on a large scale, and a progressive application of science.

"Usury and a system of taxation must impoverish it everywhere. The expenditure of capital in the price of the land withdraws this capital from cultivation. An infinite dissipation of means of production and an isolation of the producers themselves go with it. (Co-operative societies, *i. e.*, associations of small peasants, while playing an extremely progressive bourgeois rôle, only weaken this tendency without eliminating it; nor must it be forgotten that these co-operative societies do much for the well-to-do peasants, and very little, almost nothing, for the mass of poor peasants; and then the associations themselves become exploiters of wage labour). Also an enormous waste of human energy. A progressive deterioration of the conditions of production and a raising of the price of means of production is a necessary law of small peasants' property."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Karl Marx. *Selected Works*, Vol. II. Eng. ed., p. 283,—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> *Capital*, Vol. III. p. 937,—Ed.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 937,—Ed.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 938-39—Ed.,

In agriculture, as in industry, capitalism transforms the process of production only at the price of the "martyrdom of the producers."

"The dispersion of the rural labourers over larger areas breaks their power of resistance while concentration increases that of the town operatives. In modern agriculture, as in the urban industries, the increased productiveness and quantity of the labour set in motion are bought at the cost of laying waste and consuming by disease labour power itself. Moreover, all progress in capitalistic agriculture is a progress in the art, not only of robbing the labourer, but of robbing the soil.....Capitalist production, therefore, develops technology, and the combining together of various processes into a social whole, only by sapping the original sources of all wealth—the soil and the labourer" (*Capital*, Vol. I).<sup>1</sup>

### SOCIALISM

From the foregoing it is evident that Marx deduces the inevitability of the transformation of capitalist society into Socialist society wholly and exclusively from the economic law of motion of contemporary society. The socialisation of labour, which is advancing ever more rapidly in thousands of forms, and which has manifested itself very strikingly during the half-century that has elapsed since the death of Marx in the growth of large-scale production, capitalist cartels, syndicates and trusts, as well as in the gigantic increase in the dimensions and power of finance capital, forms the chief material foundation for the inevitable coming of Socialism. The intellectual and moral driving force and the physical executant of this transformation is the proletariat, which is trained by capitalism itself. The struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, which manifests itself in various and, as to

<sup>1</sup> *Capital*, Vol. I, pp. 555-56—Ed.

its content, increasingly richer forms, inevitably becomes a political struggle aiming at the conquest of political power by the proletariat ("the dictatorship of the proletariat"). The socialisation of production is bound to lead to the conversion of the means of production into the property of society, to the "expropriation of the expropriators." This conversion will directly result in an immense increase in productivity of labour, a reduction of working hours, and the replacement of the remnants, the ruins of small-scale primitive, disunited production by collective and improved labour. Capitalism finally snaps the bond between agriculture and industry; but at the same time, in its highest development it prepares new elements of this bond, of a union between industry and agriculture based on the conscious application of science and the combination of collective labour, and on a redistribution of the human population (putting an end at one and the same time to the rural remoteness, isolation and barbarism, and to the unnatural concentration of vast masses of people in big cities). A new form of family, new conditions in the status of women and in the upbringing of the younger generation are being prepared by the highest forms of modern capitalism: female and child labour and the break-up of the patriarchal family by capitalism inevitably assume the most terrible, disastrous, and repulsive forms in modern society. Nevertheless

".....modern industry, by assigning as it does an important part in the process of production, outside the domestic sphere, to women, to young persons, and to children of both sexes, creates a new economical foundation for a higher form of the family and of the relations between the sexes. It is, of course, just as absurd to hold the Teutonic-Christian form of the family to be absolute and final as it would be to apply that character to the ancient Roman, the ancient Greek, or

the Eastern forms which, moreover, taken together form a series in historic development. Moreover, it is obvious that the fact of the collective working group being composed of individuals of both sexes and all ages, must necessarily, under suitable conditions, become a source of human development; although in its spontaneously developed, brutal, capitalistic form, where the labourer exists for the process of production, and not the process of production for the labourer, that fact is a pestiferous source of corruption and slavery" (*Capital*, Vol. I).<sup>1</sup>

In the factory system is to be found

"the germ of the education of the future, an education that will, in the case of every child over a given age, combine productive labour with instruction and gymnastics, not only as one of the methods of adding to the efficiency of production, but as the only method of producing fully developed human beings" (*Ibid*).<sup>2</sup>

Marxian Socialism, puts the question of nationality and of the state on the same historical footing, not only in the sense of explaining the past but also in the sense of a fearless forecast of the future and of bold practical action for its achievement. Nations are an inevitable product, an inevitable form in the bourgeois epoch of social development. The working class could not grow strong, could not become mature and formed without "constituting itself within the nation," without being "national" ("though not in the bourgeois sense of the word"). But the development of capitalism more and more breaks down national barriers, destroys national seclusion, substitutes class antagonisms for national antagonisms. It is, therefore perfectly true that in the developed capitalist countries "the workingmen have no country" and that "united action" of the workers, of the civilised countries at least, "is one of the first conditions for the emancipation of the

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 536.—*Ed.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 529-30.—*Ed.*

proletariat" (*Communist Manifesto*). The state, which is organised violence, inevitably came into being at a definite stage in the development of society, when society had split into irreconcilable classes, and when it could not exist without an "authority" ostensibly standing above society and to a certain degree separate from society. Arising out of class contradictions, the state becomes

"the state of the most powerful economic class that by force of its economic supremacy becomes also the ruling political class and thus acquires new means of subduing and exploiting the oppressed class. The antique state was, therefore, the state of the slave-owners for the purpose of holding the slaves in check. The feudal state was the organ of the nobility for the oppression of the serfs and dependent farmers. The modern representative state is a tool of the capitalist exploiters of wage-labour" (Engels, *The Origin of the family, Private Property and the State*, a work in which the writer expounds his own and Marx's views).<sup>1</sup>

Even the freest and most progressive form of the bourgeois state, the democratic republic, in no way removes this fact, but merely changes its form (connection between the government and the stock exchange, corruption—direct and indirect—of the officialdom and the press, etc.). Socialism, by leading to the abolition of classes, will thereby lead to the abolition of the state.

"The first act," writes Engels in *Anti-Duhring*, "in which the state really comes forward as the representative of society as a whole—the taking possession of the means of production in the name of society—is at the same time its last independent act as a state. The interference of the state power in social relations becomes superfluous in one sphere after another, and then ceases of itself. The government of persons is replaced by the administration of things and the direction of the processes of production. The state is not 'abolished,' it withers away."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Charles H. Kerr edition, Chicago. 1902. pp. 208-09.—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> *Anti-Duhring*, p. 315.—Ed.

"The society, that is to reorganise production on the basis of a free and equal association of the producers, will transfer the machinery of state where it will then belong : into the museum of antiquities by the side of the spinning wheel and the bronze axe" (Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*).<sup>1</sup>

Finally, as regards the attitude of Marxian Socialism towards the small peasantry, which will continue to exist in the period of the expropriation of the expropriators, we must refer to a declaration made by Engels which expresses Marx's views.

"When we take possession of the state power, we shall not even think of forcibly expropriating the small peasants (with or without compensation), as we shall have to do in relation to the large land-owners. Our task as regards the small peasants will first of all be to lead their private enterprise and private property into co-operative lines, not forcibly, but by example and by granting public aid for this purpose. And then, of course, we shall have ample means of showing the small peasant all the advantages connected with such a transformation, advantages which even now should be explained to him" (Engels, "The Peasant Question in France and Germany." Original in the *Neue Zeit*).

## TACTICS OF THE CLASS STRUGGLE OF THE PROLETARIAT

Having as early as 1844-45<sup>2</sup> examined one of the chief defects of the earlier materialism, namely, its inability to understand the conditions or appreciate the importance of practical-revolutionary activity, Marx, along with his theoretical work, all his life devoted unrelaxed attention to the tactical problems of the class struggle of the proletariat. An immense amount of material bearing on this is contained in *all* the works of Marx and particularly in the four volumes of his correspondence with Engels published in 1913. This material is still far from having been

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 211-12.—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> Lenin is referring to Marx's and Engels' *The Holy Family* and *German Ideology* and to Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach*.—Ed.

assembled, collated, studied and examined. We shall therefore have to confine ourselves here to the most general and briefest remarks, emphasising that Marx justly considered that without *this* side to it materialism was irresolute, one-sided, and lifeless. Marx defined the fundamental task of proletarian tactics in strict conformity with all the postulates of his materialist-dialectical conception. Only an objective consideration of the sum total of reciprocal relations of all the classes of a given society without exception, and, consequently, a consideration of the objective stage of development of that society and of the reciprocal relations between it and other societies, can serve as a basis for the correct tactics of the advanced class. At the same time, all classes and all countries are not regarded statically, but dynamically, *i.e.*, not in a state of immobility, but in motion (the laws of which are determined by the economic conditions of existence of each class). Motion, in its turn, is regarded not only from the standpoint of the past, but also from the standpoint of the future, and, at the same time, not in accordance with the vulgar conception of the "evolutionists," who see only slow changes, but dialectically: in historical development of such magnitude twenty years are no more than a day, Marx wrote to Engels, "although later there may come days in which twenty years are concentrated" (*Briefwechsel*, Vol. III, p. 127).<sup>1</sup> At each stage of development, at each moment, proletarian tactics must take account of this objectively inevitable dialectics of human history, on the one hand utilising the periods of political stagnation or of sluggish, so-called "peaceful" development in order to

<sup>1</sup> The references are to the German edition.—Trans.

develop the class-consciousness, strength and fighting capacity of the advanced class, and, on the other hand, conducting all this work of utilisation towards the "final aim" of the movement of the advanced class and towards the creation in it of the faculty for practically performing great tasks in the great days in which "twenty years are concentrated." Two of Marx's arguments are of special importance in this connection: one of these is contained in *The Poverty of Philosophy* and concerns the economic struggle and economic organisations of the proletariat; the other is contained in the *Communist Manifesto* and concerns the political tasks of the proletariat. The first argument runs as follows:

"Large-scale industry concentrates in one place, a crowd of people unknown to one another. Competition divides their interests. But the maintenance of wages, this common interest which they have against their boss, unites them in a common thought of resistance—combination. . . Combinations, at first isolated, constitute themselves into groups . . . and in face of always united capital, the maintenance of the association becomes more necessary to them [i.e., the workers] than that of wages. . . In this struggle—a veritable civil war—are united and developed all the elements necessary for a coming battle. Once it has reached this point, association takes on a political character."<sup>1</sup>

Here we have the programme and tactics of the economic struggle and of the trade union movement for several decades to come, for the whole long period in which the proletariat will muster its forces for the "coming battle." Side by side with this must be placed numerous references by Marx and Engels to the example of the British labour movement: how industrial "prosperity" leads to attempts "to buy the workers" (*Briefwechsel*, Vol. 1. p. 136), to

<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy* Eng. ed. 1935, p. 145.—Ed

divert them from the struggle ; how this prosperity generally "demoralises the workers" (Vol. II, p. 218) ; how the British proletariat becomes "bourgeoisified"—"this most bourgeois of all nations seems to want in the end to have a bourgeois aristocracy and a bourgeois proletariat side by side with the bourgeoisie" (Vol. II. p. 290) ; how its "revolutionary energy" oozes away (Vol. III. p. 124), how it will be necessary to wait a more or less long time "before the British workers rid themselves of their apparent bourgeois corruption" (Vol. III. p. 127) ; how the British labour movement "lacks the mettle of the Chartists" (1866 ; Vol. III. p. 305) ; how the British workers' leaders are becoming a type midway between "a radical bourgeois and a worker" (in reference to Holyoake, Vol. IV. p. 209) ; how, owing to British monopoly, and as long as this monopoly lasts, "the British working-man will not budge" (Vol. IV. p. 433). The tactics of the economic struggle in connection with the general course (*and outcome*) of the labour movement, are here considered from a remarkably broad, comprehensive, dialectical, and genuinely revolutionary standpoint.

The *Communist Manifesto* set forth the fundamental Marxian principle on the tactics of the political struggle :

"The Communists fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class ; but in the movement of the present, they also represent and take care of the future of that movement."

That was why in 1848 Marx supported the party of the "agrarian revolution" in Poland, "the party which initiated the Cracow insurrection in the year 1846." In Germany in 1848 and 1849 Marx supported the extreme revolutionary

democracy, and subsequently never retracted what he had then said about tactics. He regarded the German bourgeoisie as an element which "was inclined from the very beginning to betray the people" (only an alliance with the peasantry could have brought the bourgeoisie the integral fulfilment of its aims) "and to compromise with the crowned representatives of the old society." Here is Marx's summary of the analysis of the class position of the German bourgeoisie in the era of the bourgeois-democratic revolution—an analysis which, incidentally, is a sample of that materialism which examines society in motion, and examines it, at the same time, not only from the side of the motion which is directed *backwards* !

"Lacking faith in itself, lacking faith in the people, grumbling at those above, trembling before those below.....intimidated by the world storm.....nowhere with energy, everywhere with plagiarism .....without initiative.....an execrable old man, doomed to guide the first youthful impulses of a youthful and robust people in his own senile interests....." (*Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, 1848; see *Literarischer Nachlaß*, Vol. III, p. 212).

About twenty years later, in a letter to Engels (*Briefwechsel*, Vol. III, p. 224), Marx declared that the cause of the failure of the Revolution of 1848 was that the bourgeoisie had preferred peace with slavery to the mere prospect of a fight for freedom. When the revolutionary era of 1848-49 ended, Marx opposed every attempt to play at revolution (the fight he put up against Schapper and Willich), and insisted on the ability to work in the new phase which in a seemingly "peaceful" way was preparing for new revolutions. The spirit in which Marx wanted the work to be carried on is shown by his estimate of the situation in Germany in 1856, the blackest period of reaction :

"The whole thing in Germany will depend on the possibility to back the proletarian revolution by some second edition of the Peasant War" (*Briefwechsel*, Vol. II, p. 103).

As long as the democratic (bourgeois) revolution in Germany was not finished, Marx wholly concentrated attention in the tactics of the Socialist proletariat on developing the democratic energy of the peasantry. He held that Lassalle's attitude was "objectively...a betrayal of the whole workers' movement to Prussia" (*Briefwechsel*, Vol. III, p. 210), incidentally because Lassalle connived at the actions of the Junkers and Prussian nationalism.

"In a predominantly agricultural country," wrote Engels in 1865, exchanging ideas with Marx on the subject of an intended joint statement by them in the press, "...it is dastardly... in the name of the industrial proletariat to attack the bourgeoisie exclusively, and never to say a word about the patriarchal cudgel exploitation of the rural proletariat by the big feudal nobles" (*Briefwechsel*, Vol. III, p. 217).

From 1864 to 1870, when the era of the completion of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Germany, the era of the efforts of the exploiting classes of Prussia and Austria to complete this revolution in one way or another *from above*, was coming to an end, Marx not only condemned Lassalle, who was coquetting with Bismarck, but also corrected Liebknecht, who had inclined towards "Austrophilism" and the defence of particularism. Marx demanded revolutionary tactics which would combat both Bismarck and the Austrophiles with equal ruthlessness, tactics which would not be adapted to the "victor," the Prussian Junker, but which would immediately renew the revolutionary struggle against him *also on the basis* created by the Prussian military victories (*Briefwechsel*, Vol. III, pp. 134, 136, 147, 179, 204, 210, 215, 413, 437, 440-41). In

the famous Address of the International Workingmen's Association of September 9, 1870, Marx warned the French proletariat against an untimely uprising; but when the uprising nevertheless took place (1871), Marx enthusiastically hailed the revolutionary initiative of the masses, who were "storming heaven" (letter of Marx to Kugelmann).<sup>1</sup> The defeat of the revolutionary action in this situation, as in many others, was, from the standpoint of Marxian dialectical materialism, a lesser evil in the general course and outcome of the proletarian struggle than the abandonment of a position already occupied, than a surrender without battle. Such a surrender would have demoralised the proletariat and undermined its fighting capacity. Fully appreciating the use of legal means of struggle during periods when political stagnation prevails and bourgeois legality dominates, Marx, in 1877 and 1878, after the passage of the Anti-Socialist Law, sharply condemned Most's "revolutionary phrases"; but he no less, if not more sharply, attacked the opportunism that had temporarily gained sway in the official Social-Democratic Party, which did not at once display resoluteness, firmness, revolutionary spirit and a readiness to resort to an illegal struggle in response to the Anti-Socialist Law (*Briefwechsel*, Vol. IV, pp. 397, 404, 418, 422, 424; cf. also letters to Sorge).

July-November, 1914.

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx, *Letters to Dr. Kugelmann*, Eng. ed., 1934, p. 123.—Ed.



